United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends establishment of United Nations Operation in Mozambique to disarm two sides' forces and provide assistance for multi-party elections next fall; calls for "substantial resources" to be made available, especially on military side.

+ Findings by United Nations Mission visiting Latvia end of October "does not reveal gross and systematic violations of human rights" in that country, says Secretary-General.

+ The 100-Day Action Programme for humanitarian assistance to Somalia "presented only partial success" due to intensified insecurity, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General's Special Representative tell follow-up meeting in Addis Ababa.

+ Development aid too often supported military expenditure, which inhibited or delayed economic reforms, Secretary-General tells Conference on Global Development Cooperation, held in Atlanta, Georgia, over the weekend.

+ Russian Federation appeals to leaders of Georgia and Abkhazia to end their "senseless fratricidal war"; calls for immediate, unconditional cease-fire.

+ Third Committee recommends declaration on minorities' rights for adoption by General Assembly.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a report to the Security Council dated 3 December, has recommended the establishment of a United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) to demobilize and disarm the two sides' forces and provide assistance for democratic elections scheduled for next fall, thus ending 14 years of civil war in that country. He said in his report that he felt "obliged to recommend that very substantial resources" be

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made available, especially on the military side. It would "not be possible in Mozambique to create the conditions for a successful election" unless the military situation is brought fully under control, he wrote.

According to his proposal, the Operation would consist of 354 military observers; five logistically self-sufficient infantry battalions, each composed of up to 850 personnel; one engineer battalion; three logistic companies; and air, communications, medical and movement control support units. The Electoral Division would consist of up to 148 international electoral staff, followed by the deployment of up to 1,200 international observers for the elections themselves. An Office of the interim Special Representative for Mozambique would be also be established, as well as an Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to oversee aid to the 3 to 4 million displaced people in Mozambique and an estimated 1.8 million Mozambican refugees, who are expected to return when conditions in the country permit.

In his report, the Secretary-General called the task which the Mozambican Government and the Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO) had asked the United Nations to assume "large and difficult". In the light of recent experiences elsewhere, he wrote, the present recommendations might be thought as inviting the international community "to take a risk". He added however that he believed "the risk is worth taking; but I cannot disguise that it exists".

The Secretary-General appointed at mid-October an Interim Special Representative for Mozambique, Aldo Ajello of Italy, who went to Maputo together with 21 United Nations military observers to assist RENAMO and the Mozambican Government in working out the details concerning the general peace agreement signed by them on 4 October.

The Special Representative has been able to appoint, despite major violations of the cease-fire at the end of October, the Supervisory and Monitoring Commission consisting of government and RENAMO delegations, with representatives of France, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The Commission is chaired by the United Nations and has three subcommissions on cease-fire: reintegration; and formation of the Mozambican Defence Forces.
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The information received and examined by the United Nations Mission while visiting Latvia at the end of October "does not reveal gross and systematic violations of human rights in that country", a report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has found. A summary of his report on the human rights situation in Latvia to the General Assembly was transmitted to the United Nations by the Latvian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Aivars Baumanis, in a letter dated 2 December.

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In the report, the Secretary-General said individual violations which had been reported were "limited and not related to discriminatory policy as such" and could be remedied at the appropriate level. So far, he wrote, no one had as yet been deprived of citizenship and no segment of the population has been disenfranchised. On the other hand, the fear of marginalization by denial of citizenship and of fundamental rights related to it was real and in some cases well founded. That created a situation which was not conducive to harmonious inter-ethnic relations and, as such, posed a potentially destabilizing factor. He encouraged local contacts between Latvia and the Russian authorities in order to seek a peaceful settlement of economic, military and social bilateral problems, including the question of the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Latvia.
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The 100-Day Action Programme for humanitarian assistance to Somalia, which the United Nations embarked upon in October, had "presented only partial success" due to intensified insecurity, according to a statement by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson, and the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Ismat Kittani, delivered over the weekend in Addis Ababa.

The statement said that weaknesses in the programme's implementation still called for a second look at the United Nations' performance and capacities. Emergency relief and recovery efforts had been "restrained by lack of appropriate staff and sometimes bureaucracy and narrow institutional perspectives".

Participants at the two-day follow-up meeting to the 100-Day Action Programme agreed that the key to the eventual recovery of Somalia was the return to the rule of law, order and stability. In that respect, they said, the reduction of arms, particularly the heavy weaponry was fundamental. Participating community leaders gave their firm commitment to collaborate with the United Nations in the disarmament process.

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The problem with development aid was that it often supported military expenditure, which was frequently inhibiting or delaying economic reforms, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Conference on Global Development Cooperation, held at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, over the weekend. He urged that aid flows be used for productive purposes, particularly the development of human, physical and institutional infrastructure.

Calling for a coordinated approach to development aid, he said regional aid might be preferable to bilateral aid in many areas, because it followed practical needs and did not stop at political boundaries. Regional development banks could be the intermediaries between the donors and the countries receiving aid, indicated Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

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The Secretary-General said further that development aid must include support for the creation and strengthening of institutions of democracy. Only democratic structures could foster the open intellectual environment that the economics of the new era demanded. Today, he said, economic progress required access to information, right of expression and the necessity for popular participation.

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The Government of the Russian Federation has appealed to the leaders of Georgia and Abkhazia to end their "senseless fratricidal war". Describing the situation in Abkhazia as being on the verge of total breakdown, it called on the parties to the conflict to implement an immediate, unconditional cease-fire and separation of their armed formations. Russia further proposed that the parties to the conflict agree on a transitional "cooling-off period", to provide an opportunity for continued civilized, calm discussion of confidence-building measures.

For its part, the Russian Federation expressed its readiness to continue to act as "an honest and impartial intermediary" in the conflict between the two sides and to help bring international observers into the peace process. It would also continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population in the conflict zone and to promote the economic revival of the area.
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The General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) on Friday recommended that the General Assembly adopt a declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The proposed declaration states, among other things, that people belonging to such minorities may exercise their rights individually, as well as in community with others without any discrimination, and also that States shall take measures to ensure that people belonging to minorities may exercise their human rights fully without discrimination.

The resolution was one of 15 approved at the meeting, including texts concerning the rights of street children, alternative approaches within the United Nations to human rights issues, periodic elections, the situation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia and eight drafts on human rights situations in Cuba, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Sudan, Haiti, Myanmar, Iraq and Iran.

In terms of a draft resolution approved without a vote, the Assembly would condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the abhorrent practice of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia and recognize that the Serbian leadership in territories under their control in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Yugoslav Army and the political leadership of Serbia bore primary responsibility for that practice.

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Among the drafts on specific countries, texts were approved calling upon the Government of Cuba to allow full and free access to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation in Cuba; condemning the overthrow of the constitutionally elected President of Haiti, and urging the Government of Myanmar to respect the outcome of the 1990 elections and calling upon it to release the Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, and other political prisoners.

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